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The Political Dynamics of Islamophobia in Jokowi’s Era: A Discourse Analysis of Online Media Reporting 

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الحداثة الإسلامية المتغيرة: صورة للصوفية العبترية في إندونيسيا وبكستان 

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To Combat Extremism, 
How to Frame Religion Matters: 
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The Roots of Indonesia’s Resilience Against Violent Extremism 

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Revisiting the Dusun Nyoir Rebellion in Narathiwat (South Thailand), April 1948 

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STUDIA ISLAMIKA (ISSN 0215-0492; E-ISSN: 2355-6145) is an international journal published by the Center for the Study of Islam and Society (PPIM) Syarif Hidayatullah State Islamic University of Jakarta, INDONESIA. It specializes in Indonesian Islamic studies in particular, and Southeast Asian Islamic studies in general, and is intended to communicate original researches and current issues on the subject. This journal warmly welcomes contributions from scholars of related disciplines. All submitted papers are subject to double-blind review process.

STUDIA ISLAMIKA has been accredited by The Ministry of Research, Technology, and Higher Education, Republic of Indonesia as an academic journal (Decree No. 32a/E/KPT/2017).

STUDIA ISLAMIKA has become a CrossRef Member since year 2014. Therefore, all articles published by STUDIA ISLAMIKA will have unique Digital Object Identifier (DOI) number.

STUDIA ISLAMIKA is indexed in Scopus since 30 May 2015.

Editorial Office:
STUDIA ISLAMIKA, Gedung Pusat Pengkajian Islam dan Masyarakat (PPIM) UIN Jakarta,
Phone: (62-21) 7423543, 7499272, Fax: (62-21) 7408633;
E-mail: studia.islamika@uinjkt.ac.id
Website: http://journal.uinjkt.ac.id/index.php/studia-islamika

Annual subscription rates from outside Indonesia, institution: US$ 75.00 and the cost of a single copy is US$ 25.00; individual: US$ 50.00 and the cost of a single copy is US$ 20.00. Rates do not include international postage and handling.

Please make all payment through bank transfer to: PPIM, Bank Mandiri KCP Tangerang Graha Karnos, Indonesia, account No. 101-00-0514550-1 (USD), Swift Code: bmriidja

Harga berlangganan di Indonesia untuk satu tahun, lembaga: Rp. 150.000,-, harga satu edisi Rp. 50.000,-; individu: Rp. 100.000,-, harga satu edisi Rp. 40.000,-. Harga belum termasuk ongkos kirim.

Pembayaran melalui PPIM, Bank Mandiri KCP Tangerang Graha Karnos, No. Rek: 128-00-0105080-3
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& Mochamad Iqbal Nurmansyah
Pesantren during the Pandemic:
Resilience and Vulnerability
This paper describes PPIM’s research entitled “The Impact and Resilience of Senior High School Education Institutions in Islamic Boarding Schools (Pesantren) during the COVID-19 Pandemic Crisis: Study of 15 Pesantren in Jakarta, Banten, and West Java” (PPIM, 2021). This study is to observe the resilience and vulnerability of a pesantren towards the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition, the research also aims to explore the role of nyai (a wife of kiai, a pesantren leader) during the pandemic. The study was conducted from May to November 2021. The result of this study was presented to the public in January 2022.

The Ministry of Education and Culture (MEC) Republic of Indonesia reported that the pandemic impacted around 68 million students who were forced to do online learning (Puspita, 2021). Pesantren are one of the educational institutions in Indonesia that focus on Islamic teaching. One of the most critical aspects of a pesantren is the dormitory that enables students (santri) to live together in one environment. The essence of pesantren is to train the santri to be independent and educate them to have Islamic values. This essence can only be achieved through direct teaching. When most schools carried
out online learning to avoid transmission of the COVID-19 virus, pesantren continued to conduct offline learning as mandated by the joint decision of four Ministries; MEC, Ministry of Religious Affairs (MORA), Ministry of Health (MOH), and Ministry of Home Affairs (MOHA) (Kementerian Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan RI, 2020). Even though the Indonesian government has established a set of strict health protocols, it was found that 4,328 santri from 67 pesantren in 13 provinces were confirmed positive of COVID-19 in 2021 (Putri, 2021). A recent study by PPIM UIN Jakarta in 3 Islamic Universities found that pesantren alumni have lower knowledge, behaviour, and perception than non-pesantren alumni. In addition, the study also revealed that male students have more inadequate knowledge, behaviour, and perception than females (PPIM, 2021). On that note, the role of nyai is essential as the messenger of kiai to deliver accurate information and become a role model for santri in enforcing the rules.

This research used a mixed-method with purposive sampling. Fifteen pesantren in Jakarta, Banten, and West Java were chosen. In the quantitative method, 820 respondents (santri and teachers) filled the questionnaires. However, only questionnaires passed the focus test and were analyzed. For the qualitative method, the informants were chosen by expert sampling. 132 people participated in this survey, 82 males and 50 females, including kiai, nyai, teachers, school principals, task force, and santri from each pesantren. Data were collected by in-depth interviews, Focus Group Discussion (FGD), document reviews, and observation.

**Determinants of Pesantren’s Resilience during the Pandemic**

Resilience in this research project considers whether a pesantren can survive the pandemic through adaptation or quickly recover. This study found that pesantren’s have vital factors that support their strength in responding to the COVID-19 pandemic. The possession of these factors varies widely among pesantren’s, so the level of resilience of each pesantren also differs. The factors affecting health and educational resilience of a pesantren during the pandemic are 1) knowledge, attitude, and belief related to COVID-19; 2) leadership characteristics; 3) ability of a pesantren to build a network with several parties; 4) resource ownership, and 5) management of pesantren (Figure 1). These determinants relate to each other as an inseparable proposition in the resilience of a pesantren during the COVID-19 pandemic.
First, the knowledge of the pesantren’s community and kiai related to the risk factors of COVID-19 transmission, prevention, and treatment is an essential aspect of avoiding and handling spreading the virus in the pesantren. However, this study showed that the pesantren community has insufficient knowledge on the latest information of the COVID-19. For example, they did not understand the emergence of various virus variants with higher transmittance than the previous variant. In addition, the infodemic (misleading information) phenomenon increases the difficulty of the community in getting correct information related to the COVID-19. Therefore, the efforts to have the latest knowledge about COVID-19 are important for improving the resilience of the pesantren during the pandemic.

Furthermore, this study also found some poor attitudes and beliefs in the pesantren’s community during the pandemic. For instance, keeping the health protocols in a long period may produce pandemic fatigue and the idea that the virus is not dangerous. Such attitude and belief lead to the lack of implementation of the health prevention protocol, which causes a pesantren to be vulnerable to the transmission of COVID-19.

The second determinant is the good kiai qualities in responding to the pandemic. These characteristics include strategic leadership, collaboration, openness, brave, and independence. Strategic elements can be seen from kiai’s responsiveness and adaptive attitude when a pandemic occurs, for example, by forming an information technology (IT) unit and a health experts’ unit to handle the teaching process, either online or offline, in the pesantren. Collaborative characteristics can be seen from the efforts of the pesantren in collaborating with various parties such as local governments, health centers, and other parties in countermeasuring COVID-19. Open characteristics can be seen from the transparency of the pesantren towards outside parties, especially the health centers and local government regarding COVID-19 cases in pesantren and the most updated information related to the COVID-19 response. Brave characteristics can be seen from the kiai’s ability to make unpopular decisions, such as conducting offline learning when the pandemic is still happening. Lastly, the independent attributes of kiai are shown by his ability to create self-funding by optimizing their charity business so that they can support the pesantren to have adequate resources in responding to the pandemic.
The third aspect is the ability to cooperate with other parties outside the pesantren, such as a fellow pesantren; the socio-religious organization affiliated with pesantren; their alumni association; other community organizations (Ormas); and government. These various networks provide material support such as COVID-19 prevention facilities, testing tools, basic needs, vaccines, self-isolation facilities, treatment, and immaterial such as online training related to COVID-19 response.

Figure 1. The framework of the resilience of pesantren during the pandemic.

The fourth determinant is the ownership of resources in health and education. In the health sector, resources include infrastructure to support the COVID-19 prevention protocol, education information and communication media related to COVID-19, along with testing, tracing, and treatment facilities. This study showed that some pesantren's already had adequate COVID-19 prevention tools and facilities. Yet, other pesantren's still do not have the proper COVID-19 testing, tracing, and treatment facilities.

In terms of educational resources, it includes educational technology, finance, and human resources. Pesantren's have shown their efforts by providing educational technology for online learning, such as increasing teachers' digital literacy, installing a Wi-Fi network in the pesantren, providing laptops for students, distributing internet data packages for students and staff. Furthermore, pesantren's have collaborated with other educational institutions to increase the capacity of their teachers through various training both internally and externally. In addition, young teachers who are more technology literate have been able to help older teachers who tend to be less technologically proficient in some pesantren's. Thus, it is hoped that all teachers will be able to organize online learning as an alternative to learning during the pandemic. In terms of finances, the tolerance of a pesantren for late payment of tuition fees from students is one of strategy so that there are no cases of
students being expelled from the pesantren due to inability of students to pay tuition fees.

The last determinant factor is the management of the pesantren. In the health sector, a pesantren will have a task force and operational standards in handling COVID-19 cases that occur in the pesantren. Nonetheless, the performance and professionalism of the task force that was formed are highly dependent on the educational background and experience of the officers. Therefore, the task force officer’s with a health education background demonstrates the accuracy of the steps implemented to deal with COVID-19 in the pesantren environment. Furthermore, a pesantren’s efforts to limit the mobility and contact of their pesantren community with people from outside the pesantren are one of the keys for a pesantren to minimize the transmission of COVID-19. Moreover, managing to test and trace efforts for early detection of COVID-19 cases in the pesantren is also an important factor contributing to the resilience of the pesantren.

Pesantren Vulnerability

This study revealed the vulnerability of a pesantren during the pandemic in social and political aspects. In social aspects, there were still individuals, especially santri, who believed in a conspiracy related to COVID-19. About 45.3% the pesantren community believe that Chinese or Americans have created a biological weapon to conquer the world; 48.6% believe that China and the United States already owned vaccines before the pandemic began; and 63% believe that Jewish people created viruses to beat Muslim people. These conspiracies have caused disobedience against the health protocols and a refusal to get vaccinated. These conspiracy beliefs also challenge the preventive actions.

In the political aspect, the pesantren vulnerability includes trust issues and the community’s skepticism of the government. The trust of the pesantren’s community in the government regarding both the seriousness and their capability of handling pandemic are low. This distrust was mainly caused by the inconsistencies of government regulation and corruption issues during the pandemic era. The statistical analysis of this study showed that male individuals in pesantren had lower trust in the government than females and santri had lower confidence than teachers. Moreover, this study also found that individuals who access
information from social media are more susceptible to having a low level of trust in the government than those who do not.

Skepticism in this study is defined as a person’s vulnerability to anxiety and doubt about any policies and information issued by the authorities during the COVID-19 pandemic. Nearly half of the total respondents (43.2%) believed that the government deliberately misled the public regarding COVID-19 data, and 33.9% are skeptical of the government’s explanation regarding COVID-19.

There is a common thread between belief in conspiracies, low trust in the government, and high public skepticism. Belief in conspiracy theories reciprocally affects the level of trust in government. Distrust of the government is also caused by government policies related to COVID-19 that are considered flawed. In the end, all of these variables affect the level of social cohesion in the pesantren. However, it does not result in the level of social cohesion in the pesantren being weak in all aspects.

**The Role of Nyai and Women Leaders**

The study discovered that the role and influence of the nyai and other female leaders during the pandemic was motivated and greatly influenced by their level of education. The higher the level of education means the nyai and other female leaders have a more outstanding agency in their influence on the strategic policies of the pesantren. In addition, the nyai and other female leaders with educational backgrounds in the health sector have strong bargaining positions because of the knowledge authority that the kiai does not possess.

The roles of the nyai and other women leaders in contributing to the pesantren’s health and education resilience are to provide insights to the kiai. They also create networking with other institutions such as universities in procuring PCR tests, participating in regulating students’ nutrition to increase immunity, becoming a valuable source of information related to COVID-19, and providing education in related to the vaccination.

Although the role of the nyai and other women leaders has improved a lot as modernization and globalization have encouraged women’s participation in the public sphere, in general, the kiai is still very dominant in decision-making in the pesantren. However, amid the kiai’s domination, the nyai and other women leaders can still develop their agency through bargaining power.
The results of this research have received responses from various parties. Ace Syadzily, the deputy head of Commission 8 of the House of the Representatives Republic of Indonesia, and Waryono Ghafur, Director of Early Education and Pesantren, Directorate General of Islamic Education, MORA of the Republic of Indonesia, believe that this research is important for the improvement and value for the basis of policymaking. Meanwhile, Nur Rofiah, a gender expert, highlighted the results of this research from the aspect of gender, in particular the power relations between the kiai and the nyai, which could be influenced by the existence of the pesantren and human resources. In small and newly formed pesantren’s, the unequal power relations between a nyai and a kiai are generally less visible because the human resources are limited, so a kiai and a nyai work together to advance the pesantren. Meanwhile, in larger pesantren’s with a complex leadership hierarchy, the gender gap is thicker because there has been a lot of tug-of-war between interests. Romzi Ahmad, assistant of special staff to the vice president of the Republic of Indonesia, strengthened the findings of this study by describing various solutions to the main problems of pesantren during the pandemic with transparency, tackle digital divide, healthy lifestyle, and elevating women involvement.

The full report of this research can be further accessed on Convey websites https://conveyindonesia.com/id/publikasi/laporan-convey/.

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The journal invites scholars and experts working in all disciplines in the humanities and social sciences pertaining to Islam or Muslim societies. Articles should be original, research-based, unpublished and not under review for possible publication in other journals. All submitted papers are subject to review of the editors, editorial board, and blind reviewers. Submissions that violate our guidelines on formatting or length will be rejected without review.

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ستوديا إسلاميكا عضو في CrossRef (الإحالات النافذة في الأدبيات الأكاديمية) منذ 2014، وبالتالي فإن جميع المقالات التي نشرها مرفعة حسب معرفة الواجهة الرقمية (DOI).

ستوديا إسلاميكا مجلة مفهرسة في Scopus (Scopus) منذ 30 مايو 2015.

عنوان المقالة:

Editorial Office:
Phone: (62-21) 7423543, 7499272, Fax: (62-21) 7408633; E-mail: studia.islamika@uinjkt.ac.id
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قيمة الاشتراك السنوي خارج إندونيسيا:
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داخل إندونيسيا (روبية): 
PPIM, Bank Mandiri KCP Tangerang Graha Karnos, Indonesia No Rek: 128-00-0105080-3 (Rp).

قيمة الاشتراك السنوي داخل إندونيسيا:
لمسة واحدة 150,000 روبي (المؤسسات) ونسخة واحدة فيهما 100,000 روبية (الفرد) ونسخة واحدة فيهما 50,000 روبي.
والقيمة لا تشمل على اللفة للرسال بالبريد الجوي.
مجلة إندونيسيا للدراسات الإسلامية
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